

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner is thanked for the final Office Action mailed April 23, 2008. The status of the application is as follows:

- Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-14 and 16-19 are pending, claims 1, 4, 7, 12 and 16 have been amended herein, and claims 3, 8, 15 and 20 have been cancelled;
- Claims 3, 4, 8, 15 and 20 are objected to for depending on rejected base claims.
- Claims 1, 6, 7, 9-11 and 16-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harding et al. (US 2002/0150202 A1) in view of Schneider et al. (Medical Imaging 2001);
- Claims 2 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harding et al. in view of Schneider et al. and Proska et al. (US 6,285,733 B1); and
- Claims 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harding et al. and Schneider et al. in view of Proska et al.

The rejections are discussed below.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner is thanked for indicating that claims 3, 4, 8, 15 and 20 would be allowable if rewritten to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Aspects of claims 3, 8, 15 and 20 have been incorporated into their respective base claims (independent claims 1, 7, 12 and 16), and claims 3, 8, 15 and 20 have been cancelled herein. Claim 4 has been amended herein to depend from claim 1 instead of claim 3. As such, independent claims 1, 7, 12 and 16 (and the claims that depend therefrom) should be allowable.

The Rejection of Claims 1, 6, 7, 9-11 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 11 and 16-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harding et al. in view of Schneider et al. This rejection should be withdrawn as allowable subject matter (claims 3, 8 and 20) has been incorporated into independent claims 1, 7 and 16. Accordingly, claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 11 and 16-19 are allowable.

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Amdt. Dated: June 23, 2008
Reply to Office Action Dated: April 23, 2008

The Rejection of Claims 2 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 2 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harding et al. in view of Schneider et al. and Proska et al. Claims 2 and 5 depend from claim 1 and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependencies.

The Rejection of Claims 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

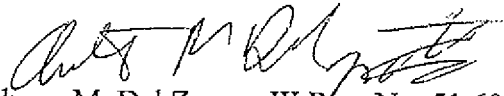
Claims 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harding et al. and Schneider et al. in view of Proska et al. This rejection should be withdrawn because allowable subject matter (claim 15) has been incorporated into independent claim 12, and claims 13-14 depend from claim 12. Hence, claims 12-14 are allowable.

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Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims distinguish patentably and non-obviously over the prior art of record. An early indication of allowability is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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